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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 001065

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/10/2019  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [CJAN](#) [CJUS](#) [DR](#)  
SUBJECT: ATTORNEY GENERAL PLEDGES CONTINUED COOPERATION ON  
EXTRADITIONS AND CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

Classified By: POLECON Counselor Alexander Margulies.  
Reasons: 1.5(b/d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Attorney General Radhames Jimenez Pena, in a 9/9 meeting with Charge, vowed that the Public Ministry would continue its strong cooperation with the USG on extraditions and criminal investigations. He was proud of the advances in professionalism, prosecutorial independence and institutionalization made by his agency, crediting USAID technical assistance for contributing greatly to these accomplishments. Charge thanked Jimenez for the Public Ministry's collaboration and emphasized our desire to continue assisting its reform program. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) The Attorney General was accompanied at the meeting by Assistant Attorney Generals Gisela Cueto (Extraditions and International Affairs), Frank Soto (Illicit Trafficking and Trafficking in Persons) and Hotoniel Bonilla (Anti-Corruption). Charge was accompanied by USAID Director, POLECON Counselor and LEGAT.

¶3. (C) Jimenez opened the meeting by expressing deep appreciation for USAID's technical assistance, which, he noted, contributed greatly to strengthening the Public Ministry as an institution, helping it develop a civil service career cadre (currently 668 career prosecutors) and the Prosecutorial Academy. Prosecutors are now hired on merit, he explained, and promoted on the basis of performance. As evidence of this, the Attorney General pointed to the recent appointment of Yeni Berenice Reynoso Gomez, a 27 year-old female, as the new Chief Prosecutor in Santiago, the DR's second largest city. (COMMENT: We have been favorably impressed by Reynoso Gomez in our dealings with her. END COMMENT).

¶4. (C) Charge congratulated Jimenez on the Public Ministry's achievements, and noted that it faces significant challenges. He then thanked the Attorney General for his cooperation on extraditions, agreeing with the AG's comment that, "there is no place to hide in the Dominican Republic." Jimenez said that his agency has its work cut out for it and expressed optimism that it is up to the task. He pledged to continue making cooperation on extraditions a priority, adding that he discussed this as well as collaboration on narcotics investigations with U.S. prosecutors during a recent visit to New York.

¶5. (C) Charge reiterated our gratitude for the GoDR's cooperation on extraditions, observing that the U.S. is working on the DR's request for the extradition of Jeffrey Alejandro Benscome Pena, although that case might seem to be progressing slowly through our judicial system. Legat then

provided an update on the status of that case, explaining that the defendant is engaged in his final appeal at the Federal Appellate Court level. Jimenez said that he was satisfied with the USG's handling of this matter. On our extradition requests the AG stated that, "No matter who it is, if the U.S. wants him and has the required documentation, then we will pursue" the extradition.

¶6. (C) USAID Director asked what the Attorney General's priorities were for future assistance? Jimenez replied that he was concentrating reform efforts on completing the Public Ministry's Institutional Integrity Program. Charge stated that we hoped to continue to provide support for these reforms. Assitant AG Soto made a plea for funding of the Ministry's model prison program, which envisions replacing the country's 32 penetentiaries with 12-13 new model prisons. (COMMENT: While prison reform is indeed a pressing need, it is not an area in which USG assistance would be practicable. USAID has rebuffed prior attempts, but, as this is one of the Attorney General's pet projects, we can expect further approaches in the future. END COMMENT.

¶7. (C) Charge commented on the recent seizure of USD 4.6 million and other property traced to a fugitive AMCIT narcotrafficker. Jimenez stated that the police are looking for him and that, given his nationality, if caught this individual can be expelled to the U.S. on illegal immigration grounds without having to go through the extradition process.

¶8. (C) COMMENT: USG agencies have an excellent working relationship with the Attorney General and his ministry. USAID's support of the institution is very appreciated and

has clearly produced positive results. The Charge's visit provided both parties with the opportunity to continue to build on these strong ties. END COMMENT.

LAMBERT